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UNCLAS NASSAU 001072

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INL/LP/KEVIN BROWN
JUSTICE FOR OPDAT/ROBERT LIPMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SNAR BF OPBAT

SUBJECT: OPBAT SETS STAGE FOR \$200 MILLION DRUG BUST

¶1. Operation Bahamas and Turks and Caicos (OPBAT) provided vital intelligence and assets to USG drug enforcement authorities that led to six arrests and the seizure of 820 kilos of cocaine.

¶2. On May 25, 2004 OPBAT personnel received human intelligence of two go-fast boats attempting to complete a large transshipment of narcotics from The Bahamas to Florida. Based on the timely confidential information, Bahamas-based U.S. Coast

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Guard and Homeland Security Department's ICE authorities established surveillance on the vessels both with fixed wing aircraft and helicopters.

¶3. With the support of interceptor boats, USG law enforcement agents boarded the first go-fast boat. The second go-fast boat engaged authorities in a high-speed chase that ended ten miles off Hollywood Beach, Florida. Five Bahamian nationals and a Florida resident were subsequently arrested.

¶4. The two boats transported 820 kilos of cocaine. ICE officials in Florida reported the seizure of 1 ton of cocaine with a street value of nearly \$200 million, making this seizure one of the biggest drug busts in many years.

¶5. Comment. Operation Bahamas and Turks and Caicos (OPBAT) once again proved to be a crucial player in the fight against drug trafficking by providing important intelligence and assets that has resulted in one of the largest drug bust in the area ever.
End of Comment.

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